

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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R 200200Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5279

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY DJAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USUN NEW YORK 497

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 2577

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,VN ASEAN

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: GSL VIEWS ON VIETNAMESE ATTITUDES

1. DURING CALL BY AMBASSADOR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FOREIGN
MINISTRY ARTHUR BASNAYAKE DISCUSSED HIS VIEWS ON ROLE OF
VIETNAM IN REGARD TO UPCOMING NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE.

2. HE SAID THAT DURING VISIT OF MME. NGUYEN THI BINH TO
COLOMBO IN JUNE, JUST PRIOR TO ALGIERS NACC MEETING, SHE
HAD TAKEN EXCEEDINGLY HARD LINE IN REJECTING SRI LANKAN
DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION ON SUBJECT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.
SHE SAID VIETNAM WOULD INSIST ON LANGUAGE DENOUNCING US
ROLE IN AREA AND ASEAN STATES AS AGENTS OF AMERICAN PRESENCE.

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BASNAYAKE SAID SRI LANKANS REPLIED THAT HER PROPOSED

LINE WAS A YEAR OUT OF DATE. IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR THE AUGUST 1975 LIMA CONFERENCE, BEING THE YEAR OF THE VIETNAMESE VICTORY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT THAT MUCH HAD HAPPENED TO CHANGE THINGS IN INTERVENING YEAR. THE US HAD GIVEN UP THAI BASES AND PULLED ALL COMBAT TROOPS OUT OF THAILAND, US AND PHILIPPINES WERE NEGOTIATING REVISIONS IN THEIR TREATY ACCORDING US BASE FACILITIES, AND ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD GENERALLY MADE CLEAR THEIR INTEREST IN IMPROVED AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM. HE SAID NONE OF THESE ARGUMENTS APPEARED TO MAKE ANY IMPRESSION ON MME. BINH, HARDNESS OF WHOSE LINE SURPRISED SRI LANKANS.

3. BASNAYAKE SAID HE FELT MORE RECENT EVENTS HAD BORN OUT THEIR THESIS. REUNIFICATION HAD FORMALLY TAKEN PLACE, A TOURING VIETNAMESE MISSION TO ASEAN CAPITALS WAS APPARENTLY SEEKING BILATERAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND PERHAPS CLOSER ECONOMIC TIES WITH ASEAN STATES, AND HANOI WAS EVEN MAKING SLIGHTLY MORE FRIENDLY NOISES IN DIRECTION OF WASHINGTON. HE SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO KNOW HOW, WHEN AND BY WHOM DECISIONS ARE MADE IN SUCH CLOSED SOCIETIES AS VIETNAM. PERHAPS NEW LINE HAD BEEN DECIDED ON BY HANOI BEFORE BINH VISIT AND SHE WAS NOT CUT IN ON IT; PERHAPS ITS UNVEILING WAS TO AWAIT FORMAL REUNIFICATION, OR EVEN MISSION TO ASEAN COUNTRIES. IN ANY EVENT, HE FELT IT WOULD BE EASIER TO MAINTAIN Milder FORMULATION IN SRI LANKAN POLITICAL DRAFT IN LIGHT OF RECENT SIGNS OF SOME DEGREE OF THAW IN AREA.

4. BASNAYAKE ALSO IN PASSING REFERRED TO VIETNAM AS ONE OF THOSE NAM MEMBERS COMMITTED TO UPHOLDING SOVIET VIEWS AT NAC.
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